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FRAUD VICTIM TELLS OF MIDNIGHT MEETING WITH PURPORTED KGB AGENT
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AUSTIN, TX.

A Yugoslavian who claimed he could win the release of an American seaman held in Vietnam defrauded the man's father then suggested they could make millions of dollars on book and movie rights after he was arrested by the FBI, the father testified Tuesday.

Bratislav Lilic, 33, is on trial in federal court on charges he defrauded \$46,000 from Douglas F. Pierce by claiming he was a KGB agent and could win the release of John Pierce, from a Hanoi hospital.

John Pierce was a crewman on the Glomar Java Sea, an oil drilling ship owned by Global Marine Drilling Co. of Houston. It sank during a typhoon in the South China Sea 200 miles off the coast of Vietnam in October 1983.

Pierce and 80 other crewmen from the ship were believed to have drowned in the storm, but there have been reports that some crewmen survived and were imprisoned in Vietnam.

A federal indictment alleged that Lilic, posing as a KGB agent named Alexander Ivanov, told Pierce that the Russian Embassy would win his son's freedom.

Pierce testified he first met Lilic near midnight June 19, 1984 in Chicago's Water Place Park, which he called "dimly lit, full of derelicts and winos lying around."

Pierce said he asked for proof that his son was alive and that Lilic was who he claimed to be. He said Lilic laughed and replied, "What do you think I do, carry my KGB card around with me?"

Pierce, who testified he was obsessed with winning his son's release, said he then paid Lilic \$15,000 of the \$46,000 he eventually gave Lilic for the release of his son and another crewman identified only as Mr. Brown.

"I hope you are real," Pierce said he told Lilic. "I'm part Apache and I will come looking for you. I'll put out a contract on you and carry it out myself."

Pierce said Lilic gave him a secret code number, BZR77416, and the telephone number of the Russian Embassy in Washington in case he needed to contact Lilic in an emergency.

The next day, Pierce said Lilic instructed him and his daughter, Dale, to fly to Miami, register at any Holiday Inn and wait to be contacted. He said Lilic called, claiming he had encountered "red tape," but that Pierce's son would be taken from Vietnam to Cuba to Miami within the next week.

After several other contacts with Lilic in Philadelphia and Chicago, Pierce finally told the FBI about the contacts but agreed to meet Lilic again in January 1985 after Lilic said the deal could still be made for an additional \$28,000.

